

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed February 11 (“the Office Action”), the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (“the Patent Office”) stated that claims 1, 5, 11, 15, 17, 18, 20, and 21 are pending in the application and that claims 1, 5, and 11 are allowed. The Patent Office further stated that claims 15, 17, 18, 20, and 21 were withdrawn from further consideration. However, these claims are amended herein to address the relevant claim objections. Thus, the applicant respectfully requests that they be reconsidered.

In the Office Action, the Patent Office acknowledged receipt of the certified copy of the priority document submitted under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).

In the Office Action, the Patent Office reiterated its requirement of a substitute specification. Enclosed with this response, the Patent Office will find a marked-up and clean version of the required substitute specification. Minor amendments to the specification have been made to conform the specification to standard Patent Office practice. The formatting of the title has been changed slightly. Section headings have been added. Misplaced text on the Abstract page has been removed. Minor typographical errors in the Brief Description of the Drawings have been corrected. These amendments are clearly shown on the marked-up version of the substitute specification. No new matter has been added by these amendments.

In the Office Action, claims 15, 17, 18, 20, and 21 were rejected under 37 CFR 1.75(c) as being in improper form. The applicant traverses this objection in light of the amendments herein.

Objection to claims 15, 17, 18, 20, and 21 under 37 CFR 1.75(c):

In the Office Action, claims 15, 17, 18, 20, and 21 were objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c) as allegedly being in improper form.

In view of the amendments to the claims requested herein, the applicant respectfully requests that the objection to claims 15, 17, 18, 20, and 21 under 37 CFR § 1.75(c) be reconsidered and withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

The applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the Remarks and Amendments herein. The applicant respectfully contends that the pending claims are allowable. The Patent Office is encouraged to contact the undersigned directly, if it is believed that such would expedite consideration of the patent application. Prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowance and passage of the claims to issue are respectfully requested.

Date: May 11, 2004

Sincerely,



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